

Mr Alok Sharma MP
House of Common
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: WTCU0781
Your ref: J16259
Date: 28 May 2015

Dear Alok

Thank you for your letter dated 22 May 2015 regarding what flood protection measures we have in place for residential properties in Purley on Thames and what advice and guidance we can provide.

Deployment of pumps

We continue to operate our pumps in Purley during a flood event to reduce the risk of flooding to properties. We decide when to deploy the pumps based on water level trigger points set at our Mapledurham Lock on the River Thames. When flood levels reach the first trigger point we move our pumps from our storage depot at Caversham Lakes to our compound at Mapledurham Lock so that they are locally available. If and when the second trigger level is reached, then we deploy the pumps to Wintringham Way in Purley.

Purley Bund

The objective of the bund is to slow the flow of flood water from the Thames. Flooding in Purley is complex and is a combination of river, surface water and groundwater. The presence of the bund means that we can use our pumps more effectively by deploying them later in a flood event to lower the surface water levels in the road prior to flooding from the River Thames. This will reduce the disruption to the residents and provide more time for other services like the buses, rubbish collection and postal service to operate.

Planned maintenance

We do not currently have any planned maintenance for the River Thames in Purley. The person who owns the land adjacent to a watercourse, known as the riparian owner, is responsible under common law for maintaining the bed and banks of any watercourse that runs through their land. We provide guidance to riparian owners on their rights and responsibilities in the form of our Living on the Edge Document which is available on our website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities> I have also enclosed a copy for your information.

Purley on Thames Property Level Protection (PLP)

We have reviewed a number of options for Purley and identified a scheme to provide Property Level Protection (PLP) to 20 properties in Purley to help protect against a 1 in 75 year flood event from the River Thames. PLP typically consists of flood doors, door guards, air brick covers, non-return valves and pumps. The PLP will provide a measure of protection from both flooding from the Thames as well as surface water flooding. Therefore, we are working with West Berkshire Council to help us to develop this project as the Lead Local Flood Authority responsible for managing flood risk from surface water. Once we have finalised agreements with West Berkshire Council we will start to offer the relevant residents

Red Kite House, Howbery Park, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BD
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
Website: www.gov.uk/environment-agency



a threshold survey for PLP.

Advice and Guidance

I have enclosed our guidance "What to do Before, During and After a Flood Event" which provides practical advice on how constituents can protect themselves and their property. I also recommend that your constituents sign up to our free Flood Warnings Direct service to help them be more prepared. Our records show that there are 483 individuals currently signed up to receive the service in Purley. Residents that are not registered for this service can sign up by calling our Floodline on 0345 988 1188 We very much appreciate that Purley Parish Council help promote our Flood Warnings Direct service in the Flood Warden letter which is also on their website.

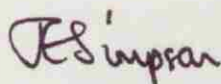
Your constituents can also contact the National Flood Forum (NFF), a registered charity that offers advice and guidance to individuals and communities at risk of flooding. They can also provide information on flood products that are available to help make property more resilient to flooding. The NFF can be contacted on 01299 403055 or on their website:
<http://nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>

The government has also published a guide to help property owners find the best means of accessing insurance in high flood risk areas. This was produced in partnership with the Environment Agency, the British Insurance Brokers Association, the ABI, the National Flood Forum and Which? among others. I have enclosed the guide which can also be found on the government website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/07/19/pb13082-flood-insurance/>.

Your constituents can also contact my local Customers and Engagement team who can provide homeowners with National Flood Risk Assessment data which provides a first step for insurers in assessing flood risk from rivers. The Customers and Engagement team can be contacted on 03708 506 506 or at WTenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

If your constituents would like to discuss anything relating to the Purley on Thames PLP project, my Flood Risk Adviser Brian Roberts will be happy to help. Brian can be contacted on 01189 535383, at brian.roberts@environment-agency.gov.uk or at Environment Agency, Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading, RG1 8DQ.

Kind Regards



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Environment Agency
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